

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 27, 2015

PLEASE RESTORE FUNDING TO CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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Good evening thank you for allowing me to speak. I am Lisa Abbey James and I live in Glastonbury, CT. Hello Rep. Tweedie, I am one of your constituents'.... I am speaking for myself as a concerned citizen of the 13th district. I am here today to request that you restore funding for the five centers for independent living. The centers provide crucial services to people with all types of disabilities of all ages and to all areas of the state.

The mission of the centers for independent living is to educate and empower others with disabilities to achieve their goals of self-sufficiency and autonomy which results in state savings through reduced reliance on state and federal entitlement programs. If funding for the CILs is eliminated there will be severe reduction of vital independent living services to people with disabilities who will face cost costly institutionalization due to lack of independent living services.

Without the help of the CILs, many of us people with disabilities would be unable to live at home, in communities, living our lives as we choose. When I heard about the Gov. proposed budget with zeros in places for Independent Living services I was shocked and outraged.

Last year I worked with Gary Allen at Independence Unlimited, the IL Center for the Greater Hartford area. Gary found funding for a new car key which was essential and much needed for me to live independently in my home with my teenage son. The replacement key cost almost \$300.00!!

If funding is not restored, people with disabilities will not get the independent living skills we need to live independently in our communities. This saves so much money for the State.

Thank you for your time.